



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE  
PROTECTED RESOURCES DIVISION  
525 NE Oregon Street  
PORTLAND, OREGON 97232-2737

January 11, 1999

Re: Backpack Electrofishing Guidelines (December 1998)

Dear Investigator:

As you are aware, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has listed or proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) several species of salmonids in the Pacific Northwest and California. The ESA requires both Federal and non-Federal parties to conduct activities in a manner that reduces risk to listed species (see ESA Sections 4(d), 7(a), 9(a), and 10(a)). As NMFS applies these requirements to scientific research activities, we remain committed to assuring that critical data can still be gathered. We believe this double purpose can be fulfilled while simultaneously easing the burdens of scientific permit (section 10 of the ESA) and consultation (section 7(a) of the ESA) requirements.

Among the impacts associated with gathering scientific data are those created by using backpack electrofishing equipment. In order to reduce those impacts, we offer the attached guidelines for pursuing research that requires electrofishing to take place. These guidelines evolved over the course of a year-long process that involved repeated discussions with Federal, state, tribal, and consultant electrofishing experts and review by the electrofishing equipment manufacturers.

It is our hope that by following these guidelines, researchers will be able to carry out their tasks with a minimum of impact on these imperiled fish. Therefore, please consider these guidelines as you design your surveys and experiments. By adhering to them, you can help streamline the process NMFS uses in evaluating the impacts of your research—regardless of whether that process takes the form of a section 7 consultation, a section 10 research permit, or in the context of the protective regulations published in a section 4(d) rule. Also, please keep in mind that this is an evolutionary process. The guidelines (December 1998) represent the best of our *present* knowledge. We are fully aware that the techniques described in the guidelines may have to adapt as new information becomes available and as the equipment changes; thus the guidelines will be periodically reviewed in order to ensure that they remain as up-to-date as possible.

If you have any questions regarding these guidelines, please contact Tom Lichatowich, of my staff, at (503) 230-5438

enclosure

Sincerely;

Garth Griffin  
Chief, Protected Species Branch

